Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden in Rennebohm Park Madison, Wisconsin

Handbook 2026

Celebrating our 46th Year!

Sheboygan Community Garden Calendar 2026

April 18 (Saturday) – Workday* (weather permitting)

May - The water will be turned on by the Parks Department when they have determined that there is no further danger of frost.

May - Straw delivery date TBD

May 16 (Saturday) – Workday* and Rhubarb Fest

June 1 - Garden needs to be planted or plot may be reassigned.

June 20 (Saturday) – Workday* and Summer Solstice Fest

June 21 (Sunday) – actual Summer Solstice

July 12 (Sunday) – Workday 8:30-10:30 am

July 18 (Saturday) – Workday*

August 2 (Sunday) – Workday 8:30-10:30 am

August 15 (Saturday) – Workday* and Zucchini Fest

September 13 (Sunday) – Workday 8:30-10:30 am

September 19 (Saturday) - Workday*

October - The 1st week of October (no exact date) the water will be shut off by the Parks Department.

October 17 (Saturday) - Workday*

October 17 (Saturday) – Annual Fall Meeting 11 am

October 25 - Garden Plots summer crops need to be cleaned up for winter.

November 14 (Saturday) – Workday* if needed

SATURDAY WORKDAY HOURS ARE from 9 am to 11 am.

FEST celebrations begin at 11 am.

***WORKDAYS:** gardeners are required to contribute a minimum of 3 work hours per 100 sq. foot plot, per year, and 5 work hours per 200 sq. foot plot per year, caring for the common areas. Volunteers are needed to care for the Food Pantry plots and community flower beds. **Gardeners are responsible for reporting their work hours to the Timekeeper. Failure to complete and report required work hours may result in loss of garden plot the following year.**

Welcome to Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden located in Rennebohm Park

We encourage you to visit the garden often. You will be surprised how many things ripen almost overnight, or how many weeds have set seed since your last visit.

Our social events offer a chance to get acquainted with neighbors from around the world. Did you know that more than a dozen languages are spoken here? Or that our age range is almost a century? But we all speak 'gardening'.

Our commonality is a love of gardening. Each of us follows our own practices for growing vegetables and flowers and we learn from each other about new plants. The mixture makes for our famous diverse potluck dinners. Be sure to join us.

If you have any questions, would like to be more involved, or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. This is a community of gardeners!

Please don't forget to report your work hours to the Timekeeper!

Sincerely,

The Garden Steering Committee
Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden
PO Box 5011
Madison, WI 53705

www.sheboygancommunitygarden.org

Steering Committee Contacts

Coordinator – Jim Baumann	sacgcoordinator@gmail.com
Registrar – Cindy Statz	sacgregistrar@gmail.com
Treasurer – Rex Lowe	Rexlowe.rl@gmail.com
Communications – Pat Lasky	palasky@wisc.edu
Timekeeper – Jennifer Behnke	sacgtimekeeper@gmail.com
Plot Monitor – Emma Lorenzen	sacgplotmonitor@gmail.com
Plot Monitor – Andrew Stammer	sacgplotmonitor2@gmail.com
Tools/Equipment – Jim Dudley	jim@berntsen-foundry.com
Member at Large – Cathy Pedracine	sacggal2@gmail.com
Member at Large –	sacggal1@gmail.com

The Gardens Network Website: www.danegardens.net

Please visit our website: www.sheboygancommunitygarden.org

Problems? Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies.
For non-emergency, garden problems regarding
thievery or mischief contact Madison Police at (608) 255-2345

Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden
New Gardener Tips

Please be aware that visiting the garden often is a MUST…. We suggest at least 2 times per week. 3-4 times is even better so that the visits can be brief and still be productive.

Learn how temperature and wind affect soil moisture and plant growth.

Look at other gardens to see what is growing well.

Catch weeds and pull them out while they are still small.

Talk to other gardeners to learn what works well for them. (Be aware that gardeners are an opinionated lot and there is more than one way to garden successfully.)

Site Preparation:

- WEED. Dig large weeds and knock the soil from the roots. Use the weed as mulch in your plot.
- Lay out your garden bed (perpendicular to slope is best for erosion control if your plot is sloped).
- Dig as needed to loosen soil or add compost. Plants grow best in non-compacted soil.

What to grow:

- Things you will use or enjoy
- Dwarf or compact varieties
- Disease resistant varieties

When to plant:

- Read the seed packet. It will have lots of useful information.

Watering:

- Keep seed beds consistently moist, not drenched. Use a gentle spray or watering can so seeds don't get washed away. Drizzle water on soil in root area. Pay close attention (visit often) to young plants until they are well established and can go a week without water. Please look at the Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden Website for watering guidelines.

Mulch:

- A thin layer of mulch (1-1/2" – 2") helps to hold in soil moisture and will suppress (not stop) weed germination. It also keeps the soil cool. Some plants like cooler soil and some like warmer soil.

Weeding:

- Plan to weed at least once per week (visit often). Weeds are abundant and grow fast. Faster than anything you have planted. When weeds are small, they can be easily removed by scraping the soil with a hoe. They can be left right there to die. Weeds large enough to require pulling can also be left to die. Once your plants are big enough, the pulled weeds can be tucked right under them – out of sight.

Please Be Aware:

- All community gardens, including ours, experience occasional thefts of produce, plants, decorative items and tools. Please think of what you may leave in your garden when you are not there.

Don't Forget to Report Your Work Hours!

- Gardeners are required to contribute a minimum of 3 work hours per 100 sq. foot plot, per year working in the common areas. Gardeners are responsible for reporting their work hours to the Timekeeper.

Good Neighbor Rules We Agree to Follow

We are neighbors in several ways. With those using plots and paths next to our own plot, with park users and with people living in nearby dwellings. The intentions of our Good Neighbor Rules are to ensure we respect our neighbors' needs and enjoyment. Our actions in our own plot must not negatively impact neighboring plots and garden paths. We are, essentially, guests of the park, a public place, and have appearance guidelines to ensure the garden is attractive. And we have rules about plant height and placement that help preserve personal safety by maintaining sightlines throughout the garden.

1. **We are an organic garden.** Organic gardens use composted manure, homemade compost and leaf mulch in place of chemical fertilizers. Synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, dog, cat, and human waste are NOT allowed. Only Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) Listed for Organic Use products or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic listed products may be used, such as NEEM or Safer's Insecticidal Soap. Look for the OMRI and USDA logos (shown below) on the product label of approved products. There are also many structural approaches – companion planting, target crops, traps, etc..... Please contact a garden board member for additional information. NO storage of garden chemicals is allowed within the plot.

2. **Garden plots must be reasonably utilized for growing food or flowers for members' use only**; flowers, herbs, and vegetables grown at the garden cannot be sold.

3. **Gardeners are responsible for harvesting produce in a timely manner.**

4. **Gardeners may NOT enter or take anything from someone's plot** without specific permission from the gardener. This includes watering cans and personal tools.

5. **Gardeners may not transfer their garden plot directly to another person.** Please contact the Garden Coordinator if you are unable to continue in the garden. The Garden Coordinator will reassign the plot.

6. **Pets are not allowed inside the perimeter fence of the garden.**

7. **Tools:** The garden owns tools, carts, wheelbarrows, and buckets for all to use. When you finish using tools, clean them and store neatly:
   - ✓All tools, equipment and supplies must remain in Rennebohm Park
   - ✓Wheelbarrows and carts should be emptied after rain to avoid pools of stagnant water where mosquitoes may breed
   - ✓Power tools, mowers, and rototillers are to be used only by members trained and approved by the Grounds Committee
   - ✓Always close and latch the shed door

8. **Water Usage: It is vital to conserve water.** Apply water onto ground at base of plant. Avoid overhead sprinkling as it promotes mildew and fungal diseases. Soaker hoses are not allowed. Do not leave hoses unattended. After watering, be sure to turn off spigot. For Garden Watering Best Practices, visit the SACG Website: www.sheboygancommunitygarden.org

9. **Required Work Hours:** Gardeners are required to contribute a minimum of 3 work hours per 100 sq. foot plot, per year, and 5 work hours per 200 sq. foot plot per year, caring for the common areas. Volunteers are needed to care for the Food Pantry plots and community flower beds. Contributing more hours is encouraged.

Gardeners are responsible for reporting their work hours to the Timekeeper. Failure to complete and report required work hours may result in loss of garden plot the following year.

Physically challenged gardeners may be exempt from doing physical work hours. There are many ways to contribute. Contact the Garden Coordinator to discuss options or possible exemption.

Workdays are typically scheduled on the third Saturday of the month (see calendar). A few Sunday workdays have been scheduled for those who are unable to attend Saturday workdays. Independent work can be arranged – contact the Garden Coordinator.

Work Sign-in Sheet: Planned workdays will have a sign-in sheet available to report date, completed time, plot and name. Independent hours must be arranged by Garden Coordinator and reported via email to the Timekeeper.

10. **Program for payment in lieu of completing work hours:** For those gardeners who are unable to complete their required work hours due to scheduling conflicts, they may submit a payment for up to 50% of their required work hours. The rate is $10 per hour. The garden strongly suggests that this program be used sparingly. This is a pilot program and its continued use will be reviewed annually.

11. **Garden fences and gates must be self-supporting and blend into the garden landscape and be 24" in height or less.** They must be made only of material intended to be used as fencing or gates such as chicken wire or hardware cloth. This type of product can be easily found at garden supply and hardware stores. Do not use things such as old window screens, metal shelving, old bed frames, mop handles, etc.

If you want to use a type of material for a structure or fence that does not meet these guidelines, please ask the Garden Coordinator or Plot Monitor and we will consider your request.

12. **Gardeners shall NOT move any Blue-Topped corner stakes, plot number stakes, boundary marking string and/or plot numbers.**

13. **Gardeners shall not attach plant supports to the perimeter fence or allow plants to grow on or through the fence.**

14. **Plant support structures located within the plot such as a trellis or stakes should**, in general, be 4 feet in height or less and be self-supporting. Structures within 2 feet of a neighbor's border should be 3 feet in height or less if they have the potential to shade the neighbor's plot. Structures not located within 2 feet of a neighbor's border may be 4 feet high. Any structure that exceeds these requirements and shades a neighbor's plot must be reduced in height.

    These structures should be made of the kind of material intended for plant supports, easily found in garden and hardware stores, or may be found wood branches from tree pruning. No white structures over 24" in height are allowed. When building a trellis, place it far enough from the plot borders so that your plants do not infringe on the neighbor or escape onto the perimeter fence. Do not use things such as old mop handles, bed frames and metal shelving for structures.

15. **Gardeners must place plants in a way that does not block sunlight from their neighbor's plots and as a safety measure, maintain reasonable visibility into the garden.** In general, plants should be less than 4 feet tall (the height of the perimeter fence). A limited number of taller plants will be allowed as long as they do not shade a neighbor and as long as they do not comprise more than 15% of the plot area. If you are

unsure of these requirements, please consult with the Garden Coordinator before planting.

In general, plants located within 2 feet of a neighbor's border should be 3 feet tall or less if they have the potential to shade the neighbor's plot. Any plant over 3 feet tall should be removed or trimmed if it is shading a neighbor's plot.

Plants that are not located within 2 feet of a neighbor's border may be taller. Acceptable areas for tall plants will vary with the plot's location and size. Some plots will have better opportunities for tall plants than other plots – such as plots along the north and west fence lines.

Think carefully about where the sunlight is coming from at all times of the day before placing your tall plants.

Our goal with tall plant restrictions is to maintain decent visibility into all parts of the garden from anywhere inside or outside of the garden. We do not want any large, "solid walls" of plants over 4 feet high, so don't make one long row of tall plants. The taller plantings should have shorter plantings between them.

16. **Gardeners may not grow invasive plants.** Invasive plants are those plants tending to spread prolifically and undesirably or harmfully in the community garden. Plants that spread rapidly underground and over the ground such as some mints, some milkweeds, Jerusalem artichokes, horseradish, and raspberries are invasive. If a plant is determined to be invasive during the growing season, the gardener will be expected to remove it if asked to do so by the Plot Monitor or Coordinator. Gardeners are encouraged to learn about a plant's growing habits before planting.

17. **Gardeners are responsible for the care of their plot**. Please contact the Garden Coordinator whenever someone other than you will be caring for

or harvesting in your plot while you are away from the garden for a short period of time (2-3 weeks). Identify the person and discuss your plan to address watering, weeding, and harvesting. Anyone working/harvesting in a plot besides the assigned gardener must be with the assigned gardener or have gone through gardener orientation. If you do not have a plan, please work with the Garden Coordinator to discuss options including possible reassignment of the plot.

18. **Gardeners are responsible for keeping plants and equipment within their plot**. Please keep in mind the size of your plants when mature. Allow enough room away from plot lines so that plants are set where they will not spill over into other plots or paths. Plants should be placed away from your plot borders – no less than ½ the full, mature size of the plants you are growing. Your plants must stay within the boundary of your plot. Plants that fall outside of your plot will be trimmed. The Garden Board encourages the use of compact plants.

19. **Gardeners must remove trash**, **unused garden equipment and diseased garden material from plots.** Park bins may **only** be used to dispose of non-vegetative material. All diseased vegetative material must be taken home and disposed of by the gardener.

20. **Gardeners are responsible for clearing weeds** in their garden including the garden fence lines bordering their garden, during the gardening season and clean up at end of the year. Gardeners are encouraged to compost vegetative matter within their plot. Park bins may **only** be used to dispose of non-vegetative material. All vegetative material must be disposed of by the gardener. Do not leave weeds in wheelbarrows or wagons or by the shed. Weeds may be placed in large paper compost bags on Saturday workdays for garden disposal after workdays.

21. **Gardeners shall remove aggressive weeds from their plots and in the common areas of the garden.** Aggressive weeds include giant ragweed, velvetleaf, thistles, pigweed and others. On Saturday workdays, volunteers will remove aggressive weeds throughout the community garden. With supervision, volunteers will enter plots to remove thistles. If you do not want anyone to enter your plot, please remove any thistles prior to Saturday workdays. Thistles are best removed at least weekly to prevent spread.

22. **Garden plots are checked regularly by the plot monitor**. When the plot monitor becomes aware of a rule violation (e.g. use of not approved garden structures) or a condition negatively affecting surrounding gardens (e.g. a bad bug infestation) the offending gardener will receive a communication stating the nature of the problem and when the problem must be corrected. The time given will vary depending on the urgency of the problem. If the problem is not corrected in time the garden board will arrange for someone to enter your plot and fix the problem.

    At times a notice of intent to enter individual plots to clear excessive amounts of weeds going to seed or to dig extremely noxious weeds such as thistle, ragweed, and velvetleaf will be in the form of an email sent to all gardeners stating this sort of work will be done on the next workday if the gardener has not done the work before the workday. If this happens you will be assigned work hours to make up for the work done in your plot.

23. **Fall Clean-up**: Gardens must be cleaned of most dead plant material in the fall. This is best done in October and early November during the time period the city picks up garden waste. Gardens not cleared in time for the last city pick-up will be cleared by a volunteer and the plot's gardener will be assessed work hours. Plant supports should be taken up and laid neatly on the ground over winter. Gardening of fall crops may continue as long as

weather permits. When these crops die, the dead plant material must be removed and taken home or to a city drop off site by the gardener. A plot can have an inch of mulch on top of the soil over winter. More than this attracts mice and voles.

24. **Penalties** (to be decided by Garden committee) for not following Good Neighbor rules:
    - ✓No guarantee to have the same plot next year
    - ✓Reduction in plot size for the next year
    - ✓Name moved to the bottom of plot waiting list
    - ✓No plot assignment for the next year

Garden Notes:

Wood Chips may be provided from time to time and are kept in piles near the north entrance. Please take only as much as you need so the supply is shared with all.

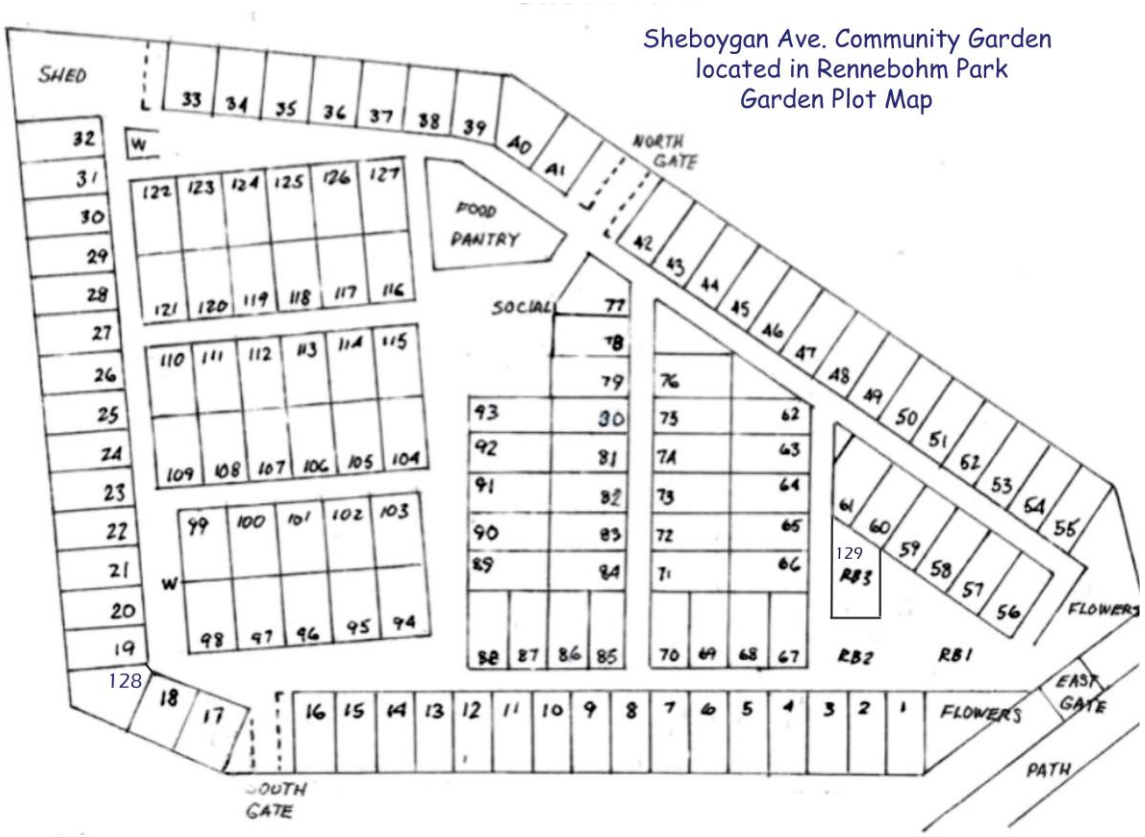
Garden Compost ~ Currently, there is no room for a large compost site at the garden. Individuals may create compost within their plot. Compost is decomposed organic matter. It can include weeds, dried grass cuttings, chopped leaves, and leafy kitchen scraps. It is used to enrich soil and can be added every time soil is turned. Compost does not include animal products (except eggshells) or pet waste. Weed seeds, sticks, stones, plastic, and other inorganic waste should be excluded. Please take home any diseased plants or plant material.

Jumping worms ~ It appears that jumping worms have been found in a few plots. The Garden has been looking into what we can do to minimize the spread. We suggest removing any jumping worms you find and placing them in a plastic bag for disposal. You may use a mustard mix on the soil to cause them to come to the surface. High temperatures (greater than

104 degrees) can kill worm cocoons. Clear plastic sheets place on the infected area and properly "sealed" on the edges can generate such high temperatures in the soil. This can be done with warmer temperatures in the spring and summer. The jumping worms die with the cold weather, but young worms hatch from the cocoons in late-May. We are looking into other options suitable for an organic garden.

Please do not move soil/plants from the community garden to your home (or other spaces outside of the garden) especially if you have seen jumping worms in your plot. A key means of slowing the spread of jumping worms is not spreading the cocoons/worms to new soils for them to colonize.

Food Pantry Plot ~ The Garden has a designated Food Pantry Plot. In addition, gardeners are encouraged to donate surplus produce from their own plots to local food pantries.



My Garden Journal